

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION
Education Committee Meeting**

**LOCATION
Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference**

**Meeting Date
June 18, 2009**

Attendees:

Kris Johnston, Chair
Anna Attla
Julie Broyles
Eric Gebhart
Ric Nelson
John Owens

Community Members/Guests:

Geri Benshoof
David Kvasager
Janean Butler
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Belinda Burns
Nancy Nagarkar

Staff:

Teresa Holt
Heidi Frost

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo
Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL

Approve the Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

Eric Gebhart made a **MOTION** to approve the agenda and the minutes from the April and May meetings. John Owens **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED**.

Correspondence

Secretary of Education

Teresa Holt stated that Arne Duncan, the secretary of education, was coming to Alaska to visit and she asked the committee members to come up with issues they want to discuss with him about special education in Alaska. Teresa Holt suggested discussing with him the idea of loan forgiveness for special educators. Heidi Frost also mentioned discussing with him ways to keep highly qualified special educators in Alaska. Kris Johnston asked the committee to get back to Teresa with any other ideas of discussion topics they can think of.

Restraint and Seclusion

Teresa then discussed a meeting she attended regarding restraint and seclusion. They would like to find out what districts are doing across the state in regards to restraint and seclusion. Eric Gebhart suggested to Teresa that they could add this onto the database for suspension and expulsion. In the first six months of school or so, that would give them an idea of how big of a problem it is. Kris Johnston suggested that the data be collected for both regular and special ed kids. Teresa added that they are hoping to have a survey that they can send out after the SPED conference in September and also noted that she and Geri Benshoof are hoping to have a talk with the commissioner.

Response to Intervention and Benchmarks

Teresa Holt then went on to a conversation she had with Dennis Clarkson regarding the RTI and benchmarks and aversive treatment forms. She stated

that there is a district doing Response to Intervention and they are testing the kids twice a month. Dennis Clarkson's suggestion was that benchmarks or objectives wouldn't be needed because the data will already be available and they will be able to track improvement through the twice a month testing. Kris Johnston stated that she feels it would save special education teachers a lot of time. Belinda Burns stated that that approach would have to be written into the IEP because the IEP is a legal document. Teresa Holt also recognized that objectives for behaviors would be difficult to track because there isn't any standardized testing for that.

Restraint and Seclusion Reporting Forms

Teresa then stated that Dennis Clarkson also brought up the fact that in every district he has been in, he has implemented a form to be completed every time restraint and seclusion has been used. Staff are required to fill those forms out and send them in, and then parents are notified that same day or the next day. Teresa noted that the districts are all doing something different and commented that they may need to find out what districts are and are not doing.

Teresa Holt stated that if the commissioner or the department is able to add that restraint and seclusion data to the statewide database. Then, by the next OSEP meeting, they would already have their data.

Nominations and Election of Chair

Kris Johnston and Anna Attla are the nominees for chair of the Education Committee. Each nominee gave a small speech on their qualifications and Teresa Holt asked that each committee member vote via e-mail by next Monday.

Stakeholder Meeting

Teresa Holt stated that they received approval from Sharon to have both the outgoing and incoming chair attend the meeting.

Approval of Letter with Indicator Recommendations

Teresa Holt stated that she would like to put together a letter of recommendations on the indicators the committee reviewed and forward it to the Department of Education. If any committee members have additional comments, they should forward them to Teresa. She would like to get the letter sent out by early fall.

Budget Recommendations for the Trust for GF Only

Teresa Holt stated that they need to decide which of their issues or priorities they would like to put forward to the Trust for general funds. Kris Johnston suggested piggybacking onto the EIC's priority for loan forgiveness to include special educators in that. Teresa stated that that also ties into their priority number three which is to increase the Alaska grown workforce.

Teresa Holt also stated that another area would be from their recommendations from the 504 survey. She believes that the recommendations are going to be to provide some training. Eric Gebhart and John Owens both commented that there really is no formalized training on 504s.

Teresa Holt stated that the third area to recommend for general funds is to get adequate permanent funding for SESA.

Report from the State Board of Education

Geri Benshoof stated that at the last Board of Education meeting, they approved an advance nurse practitioner as a member of the diagnostic team for autism. They changed some of the wording a little bit to include that it be within that nurse practitioner's scope of practice. She stated that they are also hopefully going to have a screening team that goes out to the villages and other areas so screening can be done more often and diagnosis can happen quickly.

The other thing that passed and will be up for public hearing is to change the wording from "mental retardation" to "cognitive impairment" in the education regulations. She thanked Anna Attla for providing testimony. Anna Attla commented that this is an issue that has been around for a long time so she's hopeful that things will finally change.

Department of Education and Early Development

Teresa Holt stated that Sharon Schumacher participated in the EIC meeting yesterday and stated that she is happy that they will finally be fully staffed. The first week of October, both Part B and Part C will be audited so they are going to be very busy. Sharon also told them that they passed the indicators again for the third year in a row for Part B.

Important Future Meetings/Conferences/Trainings

Teresa Holt stated that so far she has only heard from Christie about attending the Autism Summer Institute August 3 – 7 in Anchorage and if anyone else wants to attend, they should let Teresa know by the end of the week.

Kris Johnston stated that the OSEP Leadership Conference is August 17 – 19 and is for the chair of the committee and Teresa Holt. She then noted that the Special Education Directors' Conference will be September 23 – 25 in Anchorage. Geri Benshoof stated that she will be at that conference. TASH is going to be November 18 – 21. If people are interested in attending any of these conferences, they should notify Teresa Holt by the beginning of August.

Face-to-Face Meeting

After some discussion, the group decided to hold a 3 – 4 day meeting, which will include outreach, and they should vote for their choice of location by e-mailing Teresa Holt by Monday.

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.